

**Testimony of Christy Kovel, Director of Public Policy  
Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter  
Submitted to the Appropriations Committee  
Friday March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

Honorable Chairmen, Ranking Members, and Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Christy Kovel and I am the Director of Public Policy for the Alzheimer's Association CT Chapter.

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Proposed S.B. No. 37 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR AN EXPANSION OF HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE ELDERLY OR HAVE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.

Currently there are 80,000 people in Connecticut living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that this number will rise to 91,000 people by 2025. Connecticut is the 6<sup>th</sup> oldest state in the nation and age remains the biggest risk factor to developing Alzheimer's disease or other dementia.

More than 80% of the help provided to older adults in the United States comes from family members, friends, or other unpaid caregivers — and nearly half of families caring for an older adult are caring for someone with dementia.

Respite services provide temporary, substitute care that gives the caregiver a break from his or her caregiving duties. The services can be provided in a variety of settings, including the individual's home, adult day centers, and nursing homes. This temporary relief enables caregivers to ensure their loved ones continue to receive quality care while giving themselves an opportunity to manage and improve their own health which is often compromised.

The Alzheimer's Association appreciates the opportunity to comment in support of this bill that seeks to increase Home and Community Based Funding for older adults or have Alzheimer's disease. While this bill as drafted does not indicate a specific dollar amount, we recommend the following appropriation as indicated in [Senate Bill #175](#): *One million dollars to the Department of Aging and Disability Services to expand access to the Alzheimer's disease respite care program.*

The individuals that contact our 24-hour Helpline often need services and supports immediately as they've been trying to care for their loved one but are struggling with the effects of caregiving on their own health. Respite services provide support to these caregivers, 30% of whom are age 65 or older.

Investing in the Alzheimer's Disease Respite Program to meet the growing needs of Connecticut's changing demographics is good policy, fiscally smart, and support the family caregivers.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide comment today.